
OLR Bill Analysis

sHB 5186

AN ACT ADOPTING A FOSTER PARENT BILL OF RIGHTS.

SUMMARY:

This bill establishes a bill of rights for the state's licensed foster parents. The bill of rights designates the actions the Department of Children and Families (DCF) must take to support these parents, and it prohibits DCF from retaliating against them for challenging an agency decision or practice. The bill does not provide a cause of action for licensed foster parents who allege a violation of these rights.

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2012

FOSTER PARENT BILL OF RIGHTS

Under the foster parent bill of rights, DCF must provide to each foster parent:

1. consideration and respect as a member of the placement team;
2. notice of meetings DCF schedules concerning the foster child to enable the parent to actively participate and have input into the case-planning and decision-making process for the child;
3. notice of court hearings and administrative case review meetings regarding the child;
4. support services to assist in the child's care that are consistent with the child's approved permanency plan (see BACKGROUND);
5. open, complete, and timely responses to requests for information relevant to the foster child's care;
6. information on the child's medical history, general behavior, and relationships with other foster parents, as the law allows;

7. information on the child's educational history, life experiences, and placement circumstances, as the law allows;
8. information on all DCF policies and procedures related to his or her role;
9. appropriate training to enhance his or her relevant skills and abilities;
10. information on available DCF support services for the foster child;
11. an opportunity to question or appeal DCF decisions and practices without DCF retaliation;
12. information that allows the foster parent to contact DCF 24 hours a day, seven days a week to receive departmental assistance to address the foster child's needs; and
13. a copy of the foster parent bill of rights (a) when a child is placed in foster care with the foster parent and (b) at the foster parent's request.

BACKGROUND

Permanency Plan

Existing law requires a permanency plan to include:

1. a description of any problems or offenses that necessitated the child's placement of the child with DCF;
2. a description of the type, and an analysis of the effectiveness of, the care, treatment, and supervision DCF has provided for the child;
3. the current visitation schedule between the child and his parents and siblings for any child in substitute care;
4. a description by the department of every effort by DCF to reunite the child with a parent or to find a permanent placement

for the child and every effort to assist each parent in remedying factors that contributed to the removal of the child;

5. a proposed timetable for the reunification of the child and a parent, a permanent placement if substitute care is recommended, or a justification of why extended substitute care is necessary; and
6. whether the child has been visited at least every three months by a state or private agency, if the child has been placed in foster care out-of-state. (CGS § 17a-15a).

COMMITTEE ACTION

Select Committee on Children

Joint Favorable Substitute Change of Reference
Yea 12 Nay 0 (03/06/2012)

Human Services Committee

Joint Favorable
Yea 16 Nay 0 (03/22/2012)